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By: ~~Delegate Heller~~ **Delegates Heller, Cryor, King, Boschert, and Howard**

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Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 20, 2003

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CHAPTER \_\_\_\_\_

1 AN ACT concerning

2                                   **Task Force to Study the Availability of Audiology and Speech-Language**  
3                                   **Services**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing the Task Force to Study the Availability of Audiology  
5 and Speech-Language Services; specifying the composition, powers, and duties  
6 of the Task Force; providing for the staffing of the Task Force; requiring the  
7 Task Force to report its findings and recommendations to certain committees of  
8 the General Assembly by a certain date; providing for the termination of this  
9 Act; and generally relating to the Task Force to Study the Availability of  
10 Audiology and Speech-Language Services.

11 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF  
12 MARYLAND, That:

13 (a) There is a Task Force to Study the Availability of Audiology and Speech-  
14 Language Services for children in kindergarten through grade 12 in the public schools  
15 in the State.

16 (b) The Task Force consists of the following ~~13~~ 17 members:

17 (1) Two members of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the President  
18 of the Senate;

19 (2) Two members of the House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker of  
20 the House;

21 (3) The State Superintendent of Schools, or the State Superintendent's  
22 designee; and

- 1           (4)     The following members, appointed by the Governor:
- 2                   (i)     A representative from the Maryland Association of Boards of  
3 Education;
- 4                   (ii)    Two public school personnel who are employed by a local public  
5 school system and who supervise hearing and speech-language services within a local  
6 public school system;
- 7                   (iii)   Two consumer members;
- 8                   (iv)   Two individuals who are practicing members of the Maryland  
9 Speech-Language and Hearing Association; ~~and~~
- 10                  (v)     A representative from the Office for Individuals with  
11 Disabilities, Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing;
- 12                  (vi)    Two members of the Board of Audiologists, Hearing Aid  
13 Dispensers and Speech-Language Pathologists, to include one audiologist and one  
14 speech-language pathologist;
- 15                  (vii)   A physician specializing in hearing health or children's health;  
16 and
- 17                  (↔)    (viii)   A chairman.
- 18     (c)     The Department of Legislative Services shall provide staff for the Task  
19 Force.
- 20     (d)     The Task Force shall study and consider:
- 21           (1)     The scope of services provided by audiologists and speech-language  
22 pathologists in the public schools in the State;
- 23           (2)     The availability of licensed audiologists and licensed certified  
24 speech-language pathologists employed by and on staff in each of the local public  
25 school systems in the State;
- 26           (3)     The amount and cost of contracted services utilized by each of the  
27 local public school systems in the State for audiology and speech-language services;
- 28           (4)     The number of vacancies filled by contracted personnel and the total  
29 number of vacancies for audiologists and speech-language pathologists in the local  
30 public school systems in the State;
- 31           (5)     The caseloads and workload duties for the audiologists and  
32 speech-language pathologists in the local public school systems in the State;
- 33           (6)     The number of children without hearing and speech-language  
34 services due to unfilled positions for audiologists and speech-language pathologists,  
35 including the average length of time the children have been without services;

1           (7)       The cost of compensatory services and any other legal or  
2 administrative costs incurred by the local public school systems in the State for  
3 children who do not receive hearing and speech-language services; and

4           (8)       The number of children in need of hearing and speech-language  
5 services in the local public school systems in the State.

6       (e)       The Task Force shall make recommendations regarding:

7           (1)       The need, if any, for audiologists and speech-language pathologists  
8 on staff in the local public school systems in the State;

9           (2)       The need, if any, to implement methods to retain and recruit  
10 audiologists and speech-language pathologists in the public school systems in the  
11 State; and

12          (3)       Whether the current caseloads and workloads for audiologists and  
13 speech-language pathologists need to be adjusted to increase hearing and  
14 speech-language services for children in need.

15       (f)       On or before December 31, 2003, the Task Force shall issue a written  
16 report of its findings and recommendations to the Senate Education, Health, and  
17 Environmental Affairs Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee.

18       SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
19 July 1, 2003. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and, at the end of June 30,  
20 2004, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this Act shall be  
21 abrogated and of no further force and effect.